

I call on you to hold an official public hearing in my state.

Before the disastrous 2003 decision to weaken media ownership rules (which a federal court has now overturned), you held only one official public hearing. Further, FCC officials met behind closed doors 71 times with major broadcasters – but only five times with public interest groups. And to justify your actions, you used deceptive, industry-sponsored research data.

The will of Big Media had been heeded at the expense of American citizens and democracy itself. This has to end. Before you rewrite the ownership rules, I demand an official public FCC hearing in my state, impartial and verifiable research, and transparent debates.

It is time to put the needs of democracy – a diverse, skeptical, independent and competitive media system – ahead of profit-hungry media giants.

The role of the media in American society is the watch-dog over government, especially congress, the president, and the supreme court. Allowing single corporations to control many media outlets stifles diversity of opinion. Corporations define their business strategies around profits – maximizing profits. If a single slant on the news and opinion from the media will help with profits, there is no reason for corporations to refrain from influencing news and opinion.

That is up to each corporation, you might say. Yes, but there is a public trust inherent in owning a news and opinion medium, and that trust is enshrined in the first amendment. A free press cannot be free, and cannot be the government watch-dog for the people, if the news and opinions that the media portray are restricted, for any reason.

Why give them a reason?

For democracy's sake, please tighten the rules on corporate ownership of the media. There must be a limit on the number of newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and other media for any corporate or parent corporate entity.